

Bill Would Prohibit Federal Funds for Implementing Proposed Ban
November 6, 2009

WASHINGTON- U.S. Congressman Charlie Melancon (LA-03) has introduced legislation to prevent the U.S. Food and Drug Administration from using federal funds to implement a proposed ban on the sale of fresh, live oysters from Gulf Coast states during warm-weather months unless they are processed. The ban, which would begin in 2011, would severely impact Louisiana's oyster and restaurant industries, major sectors of the state's economy. *Bill Would Prohibit Federal Funds for Implementing Proposed Ban*
November 6, 2009

WASHINGTON- U.S. Congressman Charlie Melancon (LA-03) has introduced legislation to prevent the U.S. Food and Drug Administration from using federal funds to implement a proposed ban on the sale of fresh, live oysters from Gulf Coast states during warm-weather months unless they are processed. The ban, which would begin in 2011, would severely impact Louisiana's oyster and restaurant industries, major sectors of the state's economy.

"A government regulation banning the sale of fresh Gulf oysters makes about as much sense as bureaucrats telling Louisianians how to make a roux," said Rep. Melancon. "This proposed ban is a clear example of federal regulation run amok, and would cripple Louisiana's seafood and tourism industries. Fresh oysters from the Gulf are part of our state's unique culture, and I am introducing legislation that will prevent the FDA from implementing this harmful policy."

The Gulf Oyster Protection Act (H.R. 4022) would block any funds the FDA receives from being used to implement or enforce any new rules requiring post-harvest processing treatments for oysters in relation to *Vibrio vulnificus*. Senator Mary Landrieu (D-LA) has introduced a companion bill in the Senate.

Last week, Rep. Melancon [sent a letter](#) to the FDA's Deputy Director for Food Safety, Donald W. Kraemer, requesting that he meet with Louisiana oyster industry representatives to further discuss the negative consequences of this new policy.

On Wednesday, Senator Landrieu and Congressman Melancon [announced](#) that the FDA has agreed to a meeting with Gulf Coast Senators and Representatives to discuss their opposition to the proposed ban. The meeting will be next Tuesday, November 10th.

The Louisiana oyster industry currently employs 3,500 Louisianians and has an estimated \$318 million impact on the state.

Last year, there were more than 87 million cases of food-related illnesses, 371,000 hospitalizations and 5,700 deaths. However, only 15 individuals with pre-existing conditions died from eating raw oysters last year, out of over a billion servings consumed.

###